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Circuit and tried more cases than any other member of that bar; he was attorney for the Illinois Central Railroad, the greatest corporation in the State, and one which doubtless had its choice of legal talent; he was also counsel for the Rock Island Railroad, and other corporations and individuals with important legal interests at stake; he was sought as legal arbitrator in the great corporation litigations of Illinois and he tried some of the most notable cases recorded in the courts of that State."

Mr. Hill devotes his final chapter to "Lincoln, the Lawyer, as President", and it is in this chapter, of course, that the chief interest of the non-professional reader lies. It reads more like an after-dinner speaker's response to a toast than like sober history. Its estimates of men and measures are often exaggerated, but it serves to emphasize the fact that among the many influences which helped to mold Mr. Lincoln's character as President, his long and varied experience at the bar in Illinois was one of the most conspicuous and important.

The mechanical execution of the book is excellent, and a profusion of interesting illustrations, many of them new, adds greatly to its attractiveness.

FLOYD R. MECHEM.

The American Nation: a History. Edited by ALBERT BUSHNELL HART. Volume 17. *Westward Extension, 1841-1850.* By GEORGE PIERCE GARRISON, Ph.D., Professor of History, University of Texas. (New York and London: Harper and Brothers. 1906. Pp. xiv, 366.)

THE fifth decade of the last century was truly, as the editor of this series suggests, a "stirring period" in American history. It has been Professor Garrison's task to describe the administrations of Tyler and Polk as an epoch essentially complete in itself and markedly differentiated in spirit from the Jacksonian era which preceded, and from the ante-bellum period proper which followed it. Such an undertaking is not easy, for the period of the forties has usually been treated as a series of episodes in the history of the slavery question or as a prologue to that of secession and the Civil War. The difficulties surrounding the subject are not lessened by the fact that the volume is one of a series the dominant note of which is professedly national. If one were to write with an eye to the results of the great events of this decade, the growth of sectionalism rather than of nationalism might be stressed. The period was one of expansion, and Professor Garrison's thesis is that this expansion was the outcome of a national and not merely of a sectional sentiment; that the growing importance of the slavery question for a long time hindered rather than hastened it. The result of Professor Garrison's labors is a volume conceived in a spirit of fairness and executed with discriminating judgment.

The two principal characters of the period were, of course, the two

Presidents, Tyler and Polk; Tyler, the "accidental President", "the man without a party", and Polk, styled by Alexander H. Stephens as "the mendacious". That Tyler was a man of spirit and of firmness (or even of stubbornness) will not be denied, but remembering, for instance, that he was fairly dragooned by McDuffie into appointing Calhoun as Secretary of State, the author's statement that he was "a brave and determined man", "actuated in the main by courage and consistency" (p. 65) seems rather strong. Again, Polk is described as a man of "stern integrity and strength of . . . character", who had "sincere faith in the righteousness of his own purposes and of the means he used to attain them" (p. 207). The basis for this judgment is Polk's diary, and it must, therefore, be taken somewhat upon faith. That a reading of the diary points to the strict integrity of this President is a matter for such a difference of opinion that only the printing of the manuscript can determine it. Polk's relations with Santa Anna in 1846 give evidence of his aptitude for indirect and even for conscienceless official scheming, if they do not raise questions of his personal integrity. The whole decade was one in which the politician rather than the statesman directed the policies of the government. It is true, as the author states, that no one "would be willing to see his [Polk's] work undone" (p. 207), even if the methods employed to accomplish the result were condemned. But if these methods were improper and the motives unworthy, those who were responsible for them are to be judged without reference to results. For example, the diary shows that Polk was engaged in writing a war message against Mexico when he received news of the attack upon Taylor. This fortuitous occurrence was seized by the President to shift the burden of aggression upon Mexico. Polk's attitude toward Mexico prior to the outbreak on the Rio Grande is therefore the key to his motives and methods in the conflict which gave to the United States its great expansion to the Pacific.

This volume, taking westward extension as its theme, centres around the three great episodes of the decade: the annexation of Texas, the settlement of the northwestern boundary difficulty, and the Mexican War; and about one-half of the text is concerned with these subjects. The elections of 1840 and 1844, the quarrel of Tyler with the Whigs, the Ashburton treaty, the Walker tariff, and the independent treasury system receive as much attention as could be expected in a book of this size, and the treatment of each is adequate and clear. Some minor events, such as the Dorr rebellion (described in fourteen lines), are but touched upon. With the exception of the chapter upon the Wilmot Proviso, shown to be the rock upon which both great parties were to split, and that upon the election of 1848, the part of the volume which is devoted to the results of the Mexican War gives the impression of being unduly compressed. Possibly the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and certainly the compromise of 1850, were matters of such momentous national importance as to deserve more extended treatment in a vol-

ume of national history than the colonization and boundaries of Texas. This may be hypercriticism, for the admirable chapters upon Texas give so much important information not easily attainable elsewhere that one is glad to have them perhaps even at the expense of the other topics. There is, also, a lack of proportion in the treatment of the Mexican War. No attempt is made to describe in any detail the campaigns of Taylor and Scott. The events leading to hostilities, notably that of Slidell's mission in 1846, are set forth minutely and withal interestingly. Professor Garrison's familiarity with the Texan and Mexican archives is apparent in the fullness of his treatment of the Texas question. In his account of Polk's administration the invaluable diary of that President has been used to great advantage. References to it are frequent, and by it the causes of the Mexican War are shown in a new light. Polk determined to accomplish certain definite things, of which national extension to the Pacific was the most important. The author's use of Polk's diary shows how the programme was stubbornly and almost relentlessly carried out. The merit of this volume is the thoughtful and judicial treatment of a period of complicated political conditions and of problems new to the national life. If any fault is to be found with the book, it is in its lack of proportion. This, however, appears to be due rather to the plan of the work than to the author's execution of it.

JESSE S. REEVES.

The American Nation: a History. Edited by ALBERT BUSHNELL HART. Volume 18. *Parties and Slavery, 1850-1859.* By THEODORE CLARKE SMITH, Ph.D., Professor of American History in Williams College. (New York and London: Harper and Brothers. 1906. Pp. xvi, 341.)

THE title of the book, *Parties and Slavery*, calls attention to the fact that during the decade preceding the Civil War party readjustment on account of the slavery question filled a prominent place. The volume is by no means limited, however, to the topics suggested by the title. Besides dealing with the various phases of party relations and the questions directly involved, the author gives chapters on political leaders, diplomacy, railroad-building, the panic of 1857, "Social Ferment in the North", and finally a critical essay on authorities. The text is illuminated by several maps. The book does not profess to be a complete history of the decade which it covers, since other volumes in the series deal with closely related subjects. There are only occasional references to the work of the abolitionists, for example, that topic being more fully treated in volume 16 of the series.

There is evidence of a large amount of thorough and conscientious work on the part of the author. Many illuminating passages have been culled from newspapers and other contemporary publications, and there is throughout a discriminating selection of materials. There is a re-